

Easterling, Deborah

233946

From: Easterling, Deborah
Sent: Monday, December 05, 2011 2:30 PM
To: 'Kimkluge@gmail.com'
Subject: RE: In the Dark... Duke Power

Dear Ms. Kluge,

This is to acknowledge receipt of your email to the Public Service Commission. I am forwarding your email to our Clerk's Office for processing. Your email will become a part of Docket No. 2011-271-E and will be posted on our website under this docket.

Please let me know if you should require any additional information.

Sincerely,

Deborah Easterling
Administrative Assistant

From: Kim Kluge [mailto:kimkluge@gmail.com]
Sent: Thursday, December 01, 2011 8:03 PM
To: Contact
Subject: Fwd: In the Dark... Duke Power

Please take this as my official complain against Duke Power. They are a monopoly, and have unfair business regulations. I am prepared to fight them all the way. I am doing the best that I can, considering the circumstances that have entered my life.

Kimberly B. Kluge
45 Wallace Street
Greenville, SC
864-363-5313
kimkluge@gmail.com

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Kim Kluge** <kimkluge@gmail.com>
Date: Thu, Dec 1, 2011 at 7:47 PM
Subject: In the Dark... Duke Power
To: lookingout4you@wyff4.com

Dear Tim,

I am writing this letter in the hopes that you will help me, and others, have a voice in the unfair business practices of Duke Power. As you know, WYFF and the Greenville News both shared the news that Duke Power will hike rates 6%. They are a monopolistic organization. We do not have a choice in our electricity provider, which is very reminiscent of the Ma Bell era. As a community we HAVE to come together to abolish this organization from taking advantage of people like me. I am a native of Greenville and take pride in our community. I am a very proud graduate of the Fine Arts

Center, and have been active in our community theaters since childhood. I moved back to Greenville to accept a teaching position at J.L. Mann, where I taught Drama. At the end of my first year with the school district, I was laid off and replaced with an English teacher who had NO experience in teaching Drama. I immediately started the search for a new position, and decided to finish my Master of Education in Secondary Drama. I spent the Fall semester student teaching at Woodmont High School, and the Spring semester volunteering while furiously trying to secure a position in a high school within the Greenville County School District. I have now found a part-time Drama teaching position at Greenville Academy teaching Theater to our middle school youth. The downside to this position is the fact that I do not receive benefits, and do not receive sick days. Unfortunately, I was recently diagnosed with a form of epilepsy, which do to the absence of health benefits has caused a large amount of medical bills and medication costs. I have had to miss days from school, all of which are days off without pay.

What does any of this have to do with Duke Power? They are aware of my situation because I have had to choose between paying bills, eating, paying rent, medication, and putting gas in my vehicle. I was late on my last electricity bill, which was obviously beyond my control. I did, however, finally manage to pay the bill. On my next bill, Duke Power imposed a \$150 deposit on top of the current amount of my electricity bill. This brought my total to \$303.10 -- all of which was due by 5 pm today to avoid disconnection. I have made several attempts to work have Duke Power rescind this deposit. If I am I having difficulty paying my current bill, then I am obviously going to have a huge issue paying \$150 more. My attempts have resulted in Duke Power refusing to work with me, and even insisting that I had made an electronic agreement via their automatic system with them to pay the entire amount by today. For the record, I have never entered into any type of agreement with them. In fact, on November 18th, I spoke to the "top" supervisor, after waiting for them to call me. I had the call escalated through several supervisor levels to discuss the impossibility of being able to pay this bill. We left the conversation with me being very clear that I could not pay this bill, and found it an unfair business practice to charge a person who has been extremely ill (and already had service), with a deposit. I also stated that I would be filing a complaint with our policymakers, local media, and the Public Service Commission. Additionally, I asked for a phone number to contact a department in which to file a complaint. I was told that you could write a letter only. I was only offered the option of paying the full balance, or having my power disconnected. She also said that Duke Power gave money to help those in need. I inquired upon this, as I am very much in need at this time. I was told that they offered a list of community agencies to contact.

The following portion, listed in red, was a post that I made earlier on your website. I hope that you will contact me about this. I am doing my best to obtain a full-time teaching position, with full benefits. However, this is not a reality at the moment. Unfair business practices such as this, are setting people like me in an even deeper financial hole. We all remember the abolition of the Bell System, known as the Ma Bell monopoly. If they are going to impose a suggested 17% rate increase, and try to "appease" the community by a 6%, then we need to have the ability to choose our electricity provider. I can choose my phone, cable, internet, fuel, and oil heat provider. I should be afforded the right to do the same with electricity, especially in light of the blatant disregard of their customers. I feel sorry for the other people who are encountering the same situation, especially those with small children, or the elderly. PLEASE help me in my efforts to abolish and raise awareness about how this is affecting hard-working people in our community. Deregulation is crucial to offer people like me a chance to recover from the tough blows of this economy.

They should be absolutely ashamed of this type of organizational behavior, particularly in a time when we are having serious economical difficulties. I hope that everyone complaining is doing the same thing that I am by bombarding the Public Service Commission, policymakers, and the media with complaints. They ARE a monopoly. I certainly would not choose them as a service provider,

especially considering that I am a public servant. I have been ill, work part-time (thanks to our wonderful school district), and have to make EVERY penny count. Due to my job cut (which I am VERY thankful for the part-time work I do have) I do not have sick days, or benefits. Being a single person who became ill unexpectedly, I was unable to pay my bill in a timely manner due to missed days at work and medical bills. I finally managed to pay my bill, albeit a little late. Due to that instance of being late ONE time, they slapped me with a \$150 deposit. Duke Power refused to work with me, and the "top" supervisor informed me that it didn't matter whether I could pay or not, they were simply a business trying to make a profit. If I cannot pay a bill for \$100, then I certainly cannot pay one for \$303.10. I have no choice in the matter, and was essentially told to pay my bill in full by 5 pm today, or have my power disconnected tomorrow. I tried 3 different times to try to work some type of payment plan out -- ALL of which Duke Power was unwilling to work with me. I was told that there were assistant programs for "people like me." I am very thankful for the assistant programs that exist for those in need, but I am unable to go and sign up for them. If I take a day off from school, I don't get paid. This leaves me with absolutely zero options.

I know I'm not the only one that sees a fundamental issue with this entire scenario. It boils down to corporate greed, and the inability to help those in need. Instead, they add exuberant fees making payment virtually impossible. I also realize that I cannot be the only person in this situation. The 6% increase may not be an issue for some people, but it means the difference of whether I can eat or get to my job. We HAVE to come together as a community to stop this type of unfair business practice. Occupy Duke Power anyone?

Thank you. I look forward to hearing from you. I would love to spend my free time trying to educate our young people, and promote the Arts, instead of worrying about how I am going to stay warm tomorrow. Please help me do this.

Kimberly Kluge
864-363-5313
kimkluge@gmail.com

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Make Art Your War ~Kimberly Kluge

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